

Nadine Slocum

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White House Recommends Designating Qatar as Major Non-NATO Ally

Earlier this week, President Biden met with Qatari Amir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. After the meeting, the President announced plans to nominate Qatar as a “major non-NATO ally” for the United States. According to the U.S. State Department, a designation as a major non-NATO ally (MNNA), serves as a “powerful symbol of the close relationship the United States shares with those countries that demonstrate our deep respect for the friendship for the countries to which it is extended.”

Further, nations with the MNNA designation are eligible to among other things, host U.S. war reserve stockpiles of material inside their countries. Private companies within those nations are also eligible to bid on contracts to maintain and repair U.S. military equipment. Those nations can also enter into agreements with the United States for training. MNNA also creates opportunities for cooperative research on defense and counter-terrorism issues.

Select allies have been granted that status by American presidents. Totaling 17 countries, they include Israel, Japan, Jordan, South Korea, Australia, Argentina, Brazil and Kuwait among others.

In his formal notification to leaders in Congress of the designation, President Biden wrote, “I am making this designation in recognition of Qatar’s many years of contributions to U.S.-led efforts in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility and in recognition of our own national interest in deepening bilateral defense and security cooperation with the State of Qatar.”

As always, if you have any questions or would like to connect with the Embassy of Qatar, please do not hesitate to contact me.

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JAMES P. MORAN SENIOR POLICY ADVISOR

jim.moran@nelsonmullins.com

101 CONSTITUTION AVENUE, NW | SUITE 900

WASHINGTON, D.C., 20001

T 202.689.2970 F 202.689.2860

NELSONMULLINS.COM

Biden Designates Qatar as a Major Non-NATO Ally

The move clears the way for greater security cooperation and investment at a time when President Biden is seeking help boosting natural gas supplies in Europe.



By Michael D. Shear

Jan. 31, 2022

WASHINGTON — President Biden on Monday named Qatar as a “major non-NATO ally” of the United States, a designation that clears the way for greater security cooperation and investment in the Gulf nation at a time when Mr. Biden is seeking help boosting natural gas supplies in Europe.

The president is eager to reassure European nations that they will not suffer natural gas shortages if a war between Ukraine and Russia breaks out in the weeks ahead. Russia is one of the largest suppliers of natural gas to Germany and other countries in western Europe.

Mr. Biden informed reporters of the planned designation on Monday before a meeting at the White House with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad al-Thani, the emir of Qatar. The president praised the relationship between the two countries over the past half-century on issues like Afghanistan, the dispute between Israel and the Palestinians, and the fight against the Islamic State.

“I am notifying Congress that I will designate Qatar as a major non-NATO ally to reflect the importance of our relationship,” Mr. Biden said. “I think it’s long overdue.”

Only 17 other countries have been granted that status by American presidents. They include Australia, Egypt, Israel, Japan, South Korea, Jordan, New Zealand, Thailand, Kuwait, Morocco, Pakistan, Bahrain, Philippines, Argentina, Afghanistan and Tunisia. Former President Donald Trump conferred the status on Brazil in 2019.

Understand Russia’s Relationship With the West

The tension between the regions is growing and Russian President Vladimir Putin is increasingly willing to take geopolitical risks and assert his demands.

- **Competing for Influence:** For months, the threat of confrontation has been growing in a stretch of Europe from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea.

- **Threat of Invasion:** As the Russian military builds its presence near Ukraine, Western nations are seeking to avert a worsening of the situation.
- **Energy Politics:** Europe is a huge customer of Russia's fossil fuels. The rising tensions in Ukraine are driving fears of a midwinter cutoff.
- **Migrant Crisis:** As people gathered on the eastern border of the European Union, Russia's uneasy alliance with Belarus triggered additional friction.
- **Militarizing Society:** With a "youth army" and initiatives promoting patriotism, the Russian government is pushing the idea that a fight might be coming.

Conferring the status of "major non-NATO ally" on a country does not guarantee that the United States will come to the defense of that country in the event of an attack. That guarantee — laid out in Article 5 of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization's founding treaty — is limited to full members of the alliance.

But the designation gives Qatar more diplomatic prestige and access to technology, security systems and training by U.S. defense forces that has not been previously available to it. The move is often used to prod countries toward closer ties with the United States and other Western nations.

Mr. Biden formally notified leaders in Congress of the designation in a letter, just hours after his statement to reporters.

"I am making this designation in recognition of Qatar's many years of contributions to U.S.-led efforts in the U.S. Central Command area of responsibility and in recognition of our own national interest in deepening bilateral defense and security cooperation with the State of Qatar," Mr. Biden wrote.

The looming conflict between Russia and Ukraine is the immediate concern for Mr. Biden, who is seeking to maintain unity with America's European allies behind threats of sanctions on Russia if President Vladimir V. Putin decides to invade.

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Concerns about the possibility that Russia might restrict the flow of natural gas to Europe could undermine that unity, and White House officials have said they are working with other nations around the world to provide reassurances to European leaders if that should come

to pass.

In a readout of Mr. Biden's meeting with the emir Monday evening, the White House did not specifically reference the Ukraine situation.

"Together, they reaffirmed their mutual interest in promoting security and prosperity in the Gulf and broader Middle East region, ensuring the stability of global energy supplies, supporting the people of Afghanistan, and strengthening commercial and investment cooperation," the readout said.

In the case of Qatar, Mr. Biden is also hoping to deepen economic and security ties. In his remarks on Monday, the president applauded an announcement by the chief executive of Qatar Airways of a \$34 billion deal to purchase planes from Boeing. Mr. Biden said the deal would support tens of thousands of jobs in the United States.

Under terms of the deal announced Monday, Qatar Airways will purchase a new super cargo plane from Boeing, the 777-8 freighter. Stan Deal, the C.E.O. of Boeing Commercial Airplanes, said in an announcement at the White House that "Qatar Airways' selection of the efficient 777-8 freighter is a testament to our commitment to provide freighters with market-leading capacity, reliability and efficiency."

Akbar Al Baker, chief executive of the Qatar Airways Group, called it the launch of "the most significant new freighter aircraft for a generation."

White House officials called the deal between the two companies one of the largest in Boeing's history and said it would benefit Americans by supporting tens of thousands of jobs at Boeing and its affiliated companies.

Brian Deese, the director of Mr. Biden's National Economic Council, said in a tweet that the deal could be one of the largest exports of the year from the United States, and boasted about the ways that the deal could help the American economy.

"In short, this deal boosts America's civil aviation industry, promoting greater domestic production capacity, a healthy hybrid commercial-defense industrial base and strong supply chains, while uplifting the hundreds of small businesses that feed into Boeing's supply chains," he wrote.

Michael D. Shear is a veteran White House correspondent and two-time Pulitzer Prize winner who was a member of team that won the Public Service Medal for Covid coverage in 2020. He is the co-author of "Border Wars: Inside Trump's Assault on Immigration." @shearm

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